

Use of Signs in Nashua ¹

The City of Nashua restricts the use of signs and other forms of outdoor advertising through a fairly extensive land use code. The purpose of this code is to control the use of signs and other types of outdoor advertising to prevent visual clutter and to protect public safety.

Just about all signs and forms of advertising along City streets and highways require a permit from the City's Deputy Manager of Zoning. However, there are some exceptions to the permit requirement.

Signs Not Requiring a Permit

Although signs are generally not allowed anywhere in the City without a permit, certain types of temporary signs are allowed without permits. These are listed below:

- **Real Estate Signs** *On-site* real estate signs are allowed, but must be removed within 30 days after the sale, rental or lease of the property that is being advertised. *Off-site real estate signs are not allowed.*

- **Contractor Signs** Temporary contractor signs may be posted *only during active on-site work* such as construction and landscaping.

- **A-Frame Signs on Public Sidewalks in the Downtown District** These signs must first receive approval from the Board of Public Works. (The Downtown District encompasses approximately 2 blocks on either side of Main Street and runs from Amherst and Lock Streets on the North to Fossa Avenue on the South.)

- **Temporary Signs which advertise:**

- Yard sales or lost pets
- On-site employment opportunities (no greater than 12 square feet)
- Grand opening of a new business (30-day limit)

- **Charitable and Public Service Signs**

These may be placed a maximum duration of 30 days.

- **Political Signs** These signs also have a maximum duration of 30 days.

The signs listed above must not be placed in the public way, on public property, on public structures such as street lights and utility poles, or in such a location as to cause a safety hazard. Please consult the Nashua Land Use Code for number and size restrictions on these signs.

Temporary Signs are Generally Prohibited

Temporary signs other than those mentioned above are not to be displayed without first obtaining a permit.

Temporary signage covers a broad range of advertising devices and includes, but is

not limited to, portable signs (including temporary signs on trailers/vehicles and A-frame signs), signs strapped to poles/light fixtures, posters and banners. It also includes streamers, colored flags, balloons, strings of pennants and/or twirlers.

Window Signs

Signs may be displayed in a window *inside* a building without a permit as long as they do not cover more than 25% of the total visible window area.

Accessory Signs

Accessory signs that advertise goods, products, services or facilities available on the premises require a permit. These include, but are not limited to, incidental signs that advertise trading stamps, credit cards accepted, brand names or prices. However, they are subject to a number of restrictions and their size is included in the maximum sign area allowed at that specific location.

Electronic Signs

Electronic signs and electronic message centers that have been permitted must comply with the five-second rule. That is, all messages depicted on the sign must remain stationary for a period of at least five seconds. Any movement of these messages across or onto the face of the sign must be accomplished in at least five-second increments to comply with the

¹ This brochure is a general guide and is not all-inclusive. For more information please refer to the Nashua Revised Ordinances or contact the Nashua Zoning Department.

five-second rule. Electronic signs established before 2001 are held to a one-second rule.

In-Home Business Signs

In-home businesses require a special permit to operate. They are only allowed one sign that is less than 2 square feet in area and that only identifies the occupant's name and address.

No Outdoor Display of Merchandise

Merchandise for sale or rent is not to be displayed outside on landscaped areas, parking lots or sidewalks at any time. The Nashua Planning Board must approve outdoor display for a specific area on the property through the site plan approval or site plan amendment process.

How Permitted Signage is Determined

The Deputy Manager of Zoning determines the allowable signage during the permitting process. The size, type and placement of sign(s) allowed by permit depends upon the zoning district the business is located in, the specific location within the district, the number of businesses at that location and the amount of frontage occupied by the individual businesses.

Where to find additional information

• Sign Regulations

Nashua Planning and Zoning Department
City Hall, 229 Main Street, 2nd floor
PO Box 2019
Nashua, New Hampshire 03061-2019
(603) 589-3090

Internet Access:

Go to www.gonashua.com and choose the *City Departments, Planning Department* and *Land Use Code* links respectively. The sign ordinances are contained within Division 9, Sections 16-240 through 16-269 of the Land Use Code.

• To Report Violations of the City's Sign Ordinances

Nashua Code Enforcement Department
City Hall, 229 Main Street, 2nd floor
PO Box 2019
Nashua, New Hampshire 03061-2019
(603) 589-3100

Internet Contact:

Go to www.gonashua.com and choose the *Contact the City* link. Select the *Code Enforcement Department*, fill in the rest of the requested information and send.

